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ACTION EA 15

INFO CIAE 00, DODE 00, JPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSAE 00, NSC 10, P 04,

RSC 01, SP 02, SS 20, USIA 12, ACDA 16, AEC 11, NASA 04, OST 01, SCI 05,

UPW 01, RSR 01, /119 W

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R 190251Z MAR 69
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3567
INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
AMCONSUL SYDNEY
AMCONSUL ADELAIDE
AMCONSUL BRISBANE
AMCONSUL PERTH

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <i>Malcolm Evans</i>	DATE <i>7/15/80</i>
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE _____	
TS AUTH. _____	REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐	
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒	
RELEASE DENIED ☐	
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____	

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN PRESS REACTION TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S
ANNOUNCEMENT ON REVISED ABM PROGRAM.

1. VARIETY OF INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS
HAVE COMPETED FOR ATTENTION OF AUSTRALIAN PRESS DURING
PAST FEW DAYS. PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT WAS
PROMINENTLY REPORTED, BUT EDITORIAL REACTION WAS LIMITED.
WHAT THERE WAS, WAS PREDOMINANTLY CRITICAL AS INDICATED
BY FOLLOWING REPRESENTATIVE EXCERPTS:

① 2. SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, MARCH 17: "PRESIDENT NIXON'S
DECISION TO MODIFY THE CONTROVERSIAL ANTI-BALLISTIC
MISSILE (ABM) PROGRAM RELUCTANTLY INAUGURATED BY
PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND MR. MACNAMARA, WILL PLEASE THE POWERFUL
BLOC OF AMERICAN URBAN VOTERS WHO HAVE BEEN
OBJECTING BOTH TO THE COST OF THE PROGRAM AND THE
PROXIMITY TO THEIR HOMES OF HYDROGEN BOMBS. BUT
IT SEEMS UNLIKELY TO SATISFY ANYBODY ELSE...IT WILL
CERTAINLY NOT PLEASE MOSCOW...AND IT WILL NOT PLEASE
OTHER COUNTRIES WHO SEE ABM COMPETITION AS BOUND TO
ACCELERATE THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE (AND, INCIDENTALLY,

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FURTHER DAMAGE THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY)...MR. NIXON'S CHOICE CLEVERLY MEETS MANY OF HIS POLITICAL PROBLEMS, BUT IT MAKES NO CONTRIBUTION TO THE ESSENTIAL MILITARY PROBLEMS OF DISARMAMENT WHICH HE AND ALL OF US SEE AS THE MOST PRESSING CHALLENGE TO STATESMANSHIP TODAY."

3. AUSTRALIAN, MARCH 17: "MR. NIXON HAS CHOSEN A COURSE WHICH APPEARS TO CONTRIBUTE NOTHING OF SIGNIFICANCE TOWARD EITHER OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL HORNS OF HIS DILEMMA...THE SENTINAL SYSTEM WILL, IN FACT, BE DEFENDING A STRICTLY 'DEFENSIVE' SYSTEM...ITS RATIONALE HAS CHANGED SHARPLY. THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION PRESENTED THE SENTINAL SYSTEM AS A DIRECT ANSWER TO A THREAT FROM CHINA...IT IS FAR MORE LOGICAL TO SEE ABM PROTECTION FOR THE MINUTEMAN STRIKE FORCE AS DEFENSE AGAINST MISSILE ATTACK FROM RUSSIA...BEST HOPE: THAT THE SYSTEM WILL NOT BECOME A REALITY OVERNIGHT, IT MAY WELL STRANGLE ITSELF AND THERE IS NEARLY FOUR YEARS IN WHICH TO PUSH FORWARD WITH DISARMAMENT DISCUSSIONS."

4. THE AGE, MARCH 17: "GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN NERVOUSLY STUDYING THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY FOR THE PAST YEAR WILL NOT BE REASSURED TO FIND ONE OF ITS GUARANTORS EMBARKING ON A NEW SPURT IN THE ARMS RACE."

5. THE AGE, MARCH 18: "BY SETTLING FOR THE 'THIN' SENTINEL SYSTEM AND MODIFYING IT, MR. NIXON HAS GIVEN THE PENTAGON LESS THAN IT WANTED AND DEMOCRATIC SENATORS MCCARTHY, FULBRIGHT AND KENNEDY AND THEIR SUPPORTERS LESS THAN THEY FEARED. HE HAS ALSO SILENCED THE OUTCRY FROM BOSTON, CHICAGO AND SEATTLE...THE WORLD MUST NOW WAIT TO SEE IF THE RUSSIANS WILL ACCEPT HIS ARGUMENTS. IF THEY DO NOT, THE NEXT YEAR MAY SEE TODAY'S CAUTIOUS HOPES OF PROGRESS TOWARDS NUCLEAR AGREEMENT FORGOTTEN IN A RACE TO FASHION NEW AND DEADLIER WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION AND DEFENSE." CROOK

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